

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), on behalf of cost-sharing partners¹ (Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD), City of Roseville (Roseville), and City of Sacramento (Sacramento)), initiated the Sacramento River Water Reliability Study (SRWRS). The goal of the SRWRS is to develop a water supply plan that is consistent with the Water Forum Agreement² (WFA) objectives of pursuing a Sacramento River diversion to meet water supply needs of the Placer-Sacramento region, and promoting ecosystem preservation along the lower American River.

To fully disclose the process and progress of study development, several interim documents would be prepared under the SRWRS to disseminate preliminary findings to the public. An **Interim Report**, completed in June 2003, outlines identified resource problems and opportunities; goals, objectives, criteria, and constraints for study development; and a series of preliminary alternatives for scoping purposes. This **Initial Alternatives Report** documents refinements of the preliminary findings; the study process; results of initial analyses and screening of preliminary alternatives for further study; and next steps in the SRWRS. It is anticipated that the Initial Alternatives Report will provide the basis for a feasibility report, which includes a **Planning Report** (PR) with an **Environmental Impact Statement** (EIS)/**Environmental Impact Report** (EIR), for Federal and local decision-making.

STUDY AUTHORIZATION

The SRWRS is authorized under Public Law (PL) 106-554, Appendix D, Division B, Section 103 (see next page), which directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a feasibility study for a Sacramento River diversion project consistent with the WFA, dated April 24, 2000.

As directed in the authorizing legislation, the SRWRS is to consider a Sacramento River diversion to accommodate the following water supply requests:

- PCWA – 35,000 acre-feet (AF) per year of its Central Valley Project (CVP) contract water for municipal and industrial (M&I) uses.
- SSWD – 29,000 AF per year from its PCWA water sale agreement³ for use in a groundwater stabilization project.

¹ The Reclamation Manual, Directives and Standards CMP 05-02, requires non-Federal cost-sharing for the SRWRS. On June 26, 2002, PCWA signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Reclamation to share a minimum of 50 percent of the study cost. PCWA then entered into separate cost-sharing agreements with its third-party cost-sharing partners: SSWD, Roseville, and Sacramento.

² The Sacramento Area Water Forum, created in 1993, comprises business and agricultural leaders, citizens groups, environmentalists, water managers, and local governments in the Sacramento region who joined together to meet two co-equal objectives to (1) provide a reliable and safe water supply for the region's economic health and planned development to 2030, and (2) preserve the fishery, wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic values of the lower American River. In 2000, Water Forum members approved the WFA, which consists of seven integrated elements necessary to provide a regional solution to water shortages, environmental damage, groundwater contamination, and limited economic prosperity. More details are given in **Chapter 2**.

³ This water sale agreement was originally with the former Northridge Water District. In 2002, Northridge Water District and Arcade Water District consolidated to form SSWD.

Study Authorization, Public Law 106-554 Appendix D Division B

SEC. 103. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall conduct a feasibility study for a Sacramento River, California, diversion project that is consistent with the Water Forum Agreement among the members of the Sacramento, California, Water Forum dated April 24, 2000, and that considers—

- (1) consolidation of several of the Natomas Central Mutual Water Company's diversions;
- (2) upgrading fish screens at the consolidated diversion;
- (3) the diversion of 35,000 acre-feet of water by the Placer County Water Agency;
- (4) the diversion of 29,000 acre-feet of water for delivery to the Northridge Water District;
- (5) the potential to accommodate other diversions of water from the Sacramento River, subject to additional negotiations and agreement among Water Forum signatories and potentially affected parties upstream on the Sacramento River; and
- (6) an inter-tie between the diversions referred to in paragraphs (3), (4), and (5) with the Northridge Water District's pipeline that delivers water from the American River.

(b) REQUIRED COMPONENTS.—The feasibility study shall include—

- (1) the development of a range of reasonable options;
- (2) an environmental evaluation; and
- (3) consultation with Federal and State resource management agencies regarding potential impacts and mitigation measures.

(c) WATER SUPPLY IMPACT ALTERNATIVES.—The study authorized by this section shall include a range of alternatives, all of which would investigate options that could reduce to insignificance any water supply impact on water users in the Sacramento River watershed, including Central Valley Project contractors, from any delivery of water out of the Sacramento River as referenced in subsection (a). In evaluating the alternatives, the study shall consider water supply alternatives that would increase water supply for, or in, the Sacramento River watershed. The study should be coordinated with the CALFED program and take advantage of information already developed within that program to investigate water supply increase alternatives. Where the alternatives evaluated are in addition to or different from the existing CALFED alternatives, such information should be clearly identified.

(d) HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLANNING GRANTS.—The Secretary of the Interior, subject to the availability of appropriations, is authorized and directed to provide grants to support local habitat management planning efforts undertaken as part of the consultation described in subsection (b)(3) in the form of matching funds up to \$5,000,000.

(e) REPORT.—The Secretary of the Interior shall provide a report to the Committee on Resources of the United States House of Representatives and to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the United States Senate within 24 months from the date of enactment of this Act on the results of the study identified in subsection (a).

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of the Interior to carry out this section \$10,000,000, which may remain available until expended, of which—

- (1) \$5,000,000 shall be for the feasibility study under subsection (a); and
- (2) \$5,000,000 shall be for the habitat management planning grants under subsection (d).

(g) LIMITATION ON CONSTRUCTION.—This section does not and shall not be interpreted to authorize construction of any facilities.

- Other diversions agreed on by the WFA signatories and potentially affected parties upstream on the Sacramento River. The SRWRS has identified water supply requests from two additional potential project partners:
 - Roseville – 7,100 AF per year from its PCWA water sale agreement for M&I use and groundwater recharge for enhancing system reliability
 - Sacramento – An additional diversion point for its water rights to improve system reliability and facilitate regional conjunctive use⁴ in areas covered by its water right Place of Use (POU).

The authorizing legislation also includes Natomas Mutual Water Company (NMWC) fish screen improvements and a diversion consolidation, known as American Basin Fish Screen and Habitat Improvement Project (ABFSHIP). As a separate project, ABFSHIP finished its feasibility study in 2000, and NMWC, Reclamation, and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) are conducting environmental reviews of the actions proposed in the study. Close coordination between the SRWRS and

⁴ Conjunctive use is a water management action intended to increase total supplies and enhance water supply reliability by coordinated management of surface water and groundwater supplies.

ABFSHIP is necessary because both projects are planning diversions in close proximity on the Sacramento River. Their common study authorization, association with the WFA, and Federal lead agency status necessitates requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and warrants coordination for regional benefits. More details about ABFSHIP are provided in **Chapter 2**, and the need for coordination is further discussed in Chapter 7.

The authorizing legislation delineates the requirements of the feasibility study, including development of a range of reasonable alternatives, an environmental evaluation, and consultation with Federal and State resource management agencies about potential impacts and mitigation. In addition, Subsection (c) requires the Department of the Interior to include a range of alternatives with options for reducing to insignificance any water supply impacts on water users in the Sacramento River watershed (including CVP contractors) from water deliveries considered in the SRWRS. In evaluating the alternatives, the SRWRS shall, as stated in the legislation, “consider water supply alternatives that would increase water supply for, or in, the Sacramento River watershed. The study should be coordinated with the CALFED program and take advantage of information already developed within that program to investigate water supply increase alternatives. Where the alternatives evaluated are in addition to or different from the existing CALFED alternatives, such information should be clearly identified.”

NEED FOR ACTION

The WFA included a solution package to achieve its two co-equal objectives: (1) providing a reliable and safe water supply for the region’s economic health and planned development to 2030, and (2) preserving the fishery, wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic values of the lower American River. Local agencies and interested parties have been implementing measures from the WFA since its completion in 2000.

As part of the solution package, WFA signatories (including SRWRS cost-sharing partners) agreed to a set of diversion limitations on the American River, assuming a Sacramento River diversion that would provide additional needed water supply for planned development in the Placer-Sacramento region. The anticipated Sacramento River diversion would reduce a portion of future diversions from the American River and further contribute to preservation of the lower American River; however, infrastructure for this diversion does not currently exist.

Without a Sacramento River diversion, long-term water supply reliability in the Placer-Sacramento region would be significantly affected if the cost-sharing partners limit their diversions from the American per the WFA. If the first co-equal objective of the Water Forum (water supply reliability) is jeopardized, the second co-equal objective of preserving the lower American River also may become difficult to achieve.

STUDY AREA AND PURPOSE

The SRWRS study area includes the region in Placer and Sacramento counties, north of the American River and east of the Sacramento River (see **Figure 1-1**). The American River watershed (or drainage basin) encompasses about 2,100 square miles northeast of Sacramento and includes portions of Placer, El Dorado, and Sacramento counties. The American River is a tributary of the Sacramento River, and the Sacramento River watershed includes most northern California counties. Folsom Dam and Lake on the American River, and Shasta Dam and Lake on the Sacramento River, are CVP storage facilities owned and operated by Reclamation.

The purpose of the SRWRS is to develop a water supply plan that is consistent with the WFA objectives of pursuing a Sacramento River diversion to meet water supply needs of the Placer-Sacramento region, and promoting ecosystem preservation along the lower American River. Results from the SRWRS will be used as the basis for seeking necessary approvals and permits from the responsible resource agencies to allow execution of necessary agreements and construction of the recommended water supply infrastructure.

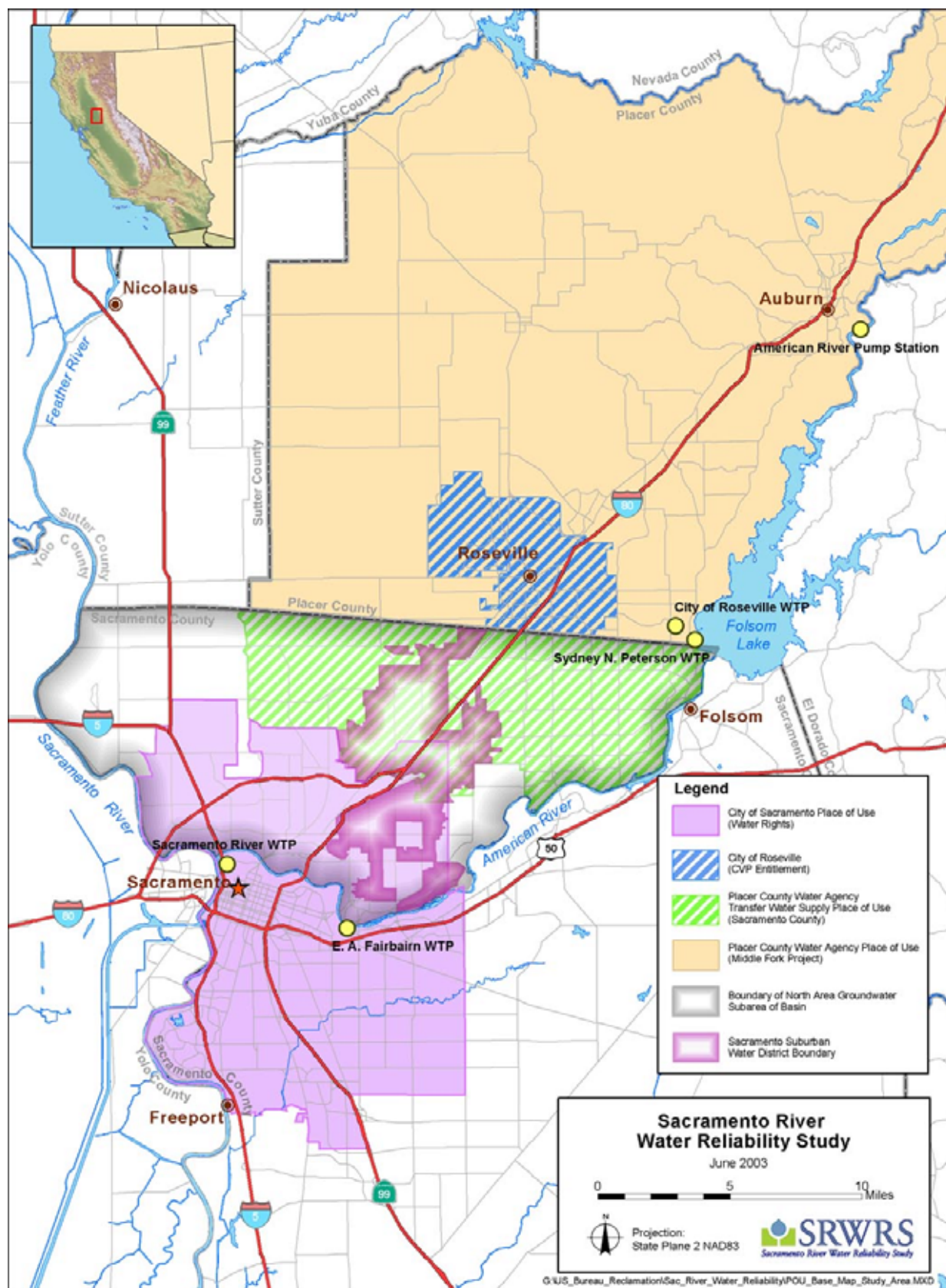


Figure 1-1. SRWRS Study Area Map

REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 1, Introduction** provides background information on the SRWRS.
- **Chapter 2, Related Studies, Projects, and Programs** summarizes studies, projects, and programs related to the SRWRS, providing a context of historical development of the SRWRS and current regional collaboration and challenges.
- **Chapter 3, Without-Project Conditions** describes existing and future resource conditions that are considered in the SRWRS in identifying water and related resources problems and opportunities.
- **Chapter 4, Water and Related Resources Problems and Opportunities** summarizes the identified water supply reliability gaps that the SRWRS will address, and related resources opportunities that the SRWRS could contribute.
- **Chapter 5, Plan Formulation Approach** describes the overall planning approach to satisfy applicable Federal, State, and local requirements, including planning objectives and criteria to resolve the identified water supply reliability problems and facilitate identified resources opportunities.
- **Chapter 6, Development of Preliminary Alternatives** summarizes the study process of developing preliminary alternatives. A wide range of measures was considered and screened for potential contributions and challenges in meeting identified planning objectives. The preliminary alternatives were complete solution packages formulated by combining retained measures.
- **Chapter 7, Comparison of Preliminary Alternatives** compares preliminary alternatives based on results of technical analysis and public scoping and provides a list of alternatives for environmental review.
- **Chapter 8, Next Steps in SRWRS Development** summarizes preliminary findings, potential challenges, future actions, and the tentative project schedule.
- **Chapter 9, List of Preparers** lists individuals who helped prepare this document.

This **Initial Alternatives Report** also includes five appendices that provide additional details:

- **Appendix A, Assessment of Water Supply Needs** summarizes the relevant background for each cost-sharing partner, including corresponding legal authority, charter, service area, water rights and contract entitlements, and a preliminary assessment of future water supply needs based on corresponding planning policies and objectives.
- **Appendix B, Development of Preliminary Alternatives** summarizes the process of developing measures that partially meet water supply objectives identified in **Chapter 5** of this report. These measures were subsequently screened and resulting retained measures combined to become preliminary alternatives used for the scoping process and Phase 1 engineering design and environmental evaluation.
- **Appendix C, Phase 1 Engineering Report** provides the initial conceptual design for each preliminary alternative. This design information was used in the scoping process, Phase 1

Environmental Evaluation, and screening of preliminary alternatives described in **Chapter 7** of this report.

- **Appendix D, Phase 1 Environmental Evaluation** describes the initial assessment of environmental effects for each preliminary alternative. The results of this evaluation were used in the scoping process and screening of preliminary alternatives described in **Chapter 7** of this report.
- **Appendix E, Scoping Report** summarizes the scoping process and input received. These inputs were considered in the screening of preliminary alternatives described in **Chapter 7** of this report and will be considered in continued study development.